

COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN
FOR HAZARDOUS WASTE SITE REMEDIAL ACTION

BERRY'S CREEK (MORTON-THIOKOL/VELSICOL)
BOROUGHs OF:
CARLSTADT, EAST RUTHERFORD,
MOONACHIE, AND WOOD-RIDGE
BERGEN COUNTY
SEPTEMBER, 1985

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
DIVISION OF WASTE MANAGEMENT
HAZARDOUS SITE MITIGATION ADMINISTRATION

451555



PREFACE

This Community Relations Plan is primarily an internal working document which serves as a guide to communication with the affected community. The activities and schedules in the Plan may be altered according to future prevailing circumstances.

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FOR REMEDIAL ACTION AT THE BERRY'S CREEK (MORTON-THIOKOL/VELSICOL) SITE
BOROUGHES OF: CARLSTADT, EAST RUTHERFORD, MOONACHIE, AND WOOD-RIDGE
BERGEN COUNTY
SEPTEMBER 1985

Introduction

This Community Relations Plan outlines activities to be conducted during Responsible Party hazardous waste remedial action at the Berry's Creek (Morton-Thiokol/Velsicol) site in Bergen County. The plan is designed to inform public officials and citizens, as well as to receive input from them on the remedial action. The plan may be updated periodically to reflect project activities and public involvement. The plan schedule is based on the project status as of September 1985. The Berry's Creek (Morton-Thiokol/Velsicol) site was included on the proposed National Priorities List (NPL) issued by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) on September 1, 1983. Of 99 New Jersey sites on the NPL, this site is ranked 21st in priority.

Background and Key Issues

Plant Site Ownership History

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1928 - 1960 | <u>F.W. Berk & Co.</u> owned and operated a mercury processing plant. |
| 1960 - 1968 | <u>Wood Ridge Chemical Co.</u> , a wholly owned subsidiary of Velsicol Chemical Co., acquired the entire 40 acre site and operated the mercury processing plant. |
| 1968 - 1974 | <u>Ventron Chemical Co.</u> purchased the 7 acre tract which encompasses the mercury processing facilities and operated the plant for this period. Velsicol retained ownership of the 33 acres not occupied by the plant. |
| 1974 | <u>Ventron</u> ceased operation of the mercury plant. |

In the late 1970s, Ventron Chemical Co. was purchased by Thiokol and in 1982 Thiokol merged with Morton to form Morton-Thiokol.

Site Background

The site (formerly known as Ventron/Velsicol site) is a 40-acre parcel located in Bergen County just east of Carlstadt on the western bank of Berry's Creek in the Hackensack Meadowlands (see attached maps). In 1974, the 7-acre parcel upon which the processing facilities existed was sold to Wolf Realty Company. Wolf Realty demolished the processing plant, excavated

the contaminated top soil, partly entombed the eastern area of the site, and constructed two warehouses on the site. The 33-acre tract of marshland owned by Velsicol was used as a landfill for waste spoils from the plant operation for much of the 45 years that the facility was in use.

Records are very sketchy or nonexistent for much of the operating history of the facility. It is known that the main operations at the plant consisted of the manufacturing of fungicides, insecticides, red oxide of mercury (ROM), yellow oxide of mercury (YOM), phenol mercuric acetate (PMA) and other organic and inorganic mercury compounds. The plant also had a distilling operation in which contaminated mercury was purified and mercury was recovered from both in-plant waste, such as "pit sludge" and from customers' waste (amalgams, batteries, thermometer, etc).

There are few records to indicate the amount of mercury products manufactured during the 45 years of operation. Estimates of the amount of mercury contamination range from approximately 50 tons to 400 tons. The contamination is spread throughout the Berry's Creek ecosystem including the adjacent wetlands.

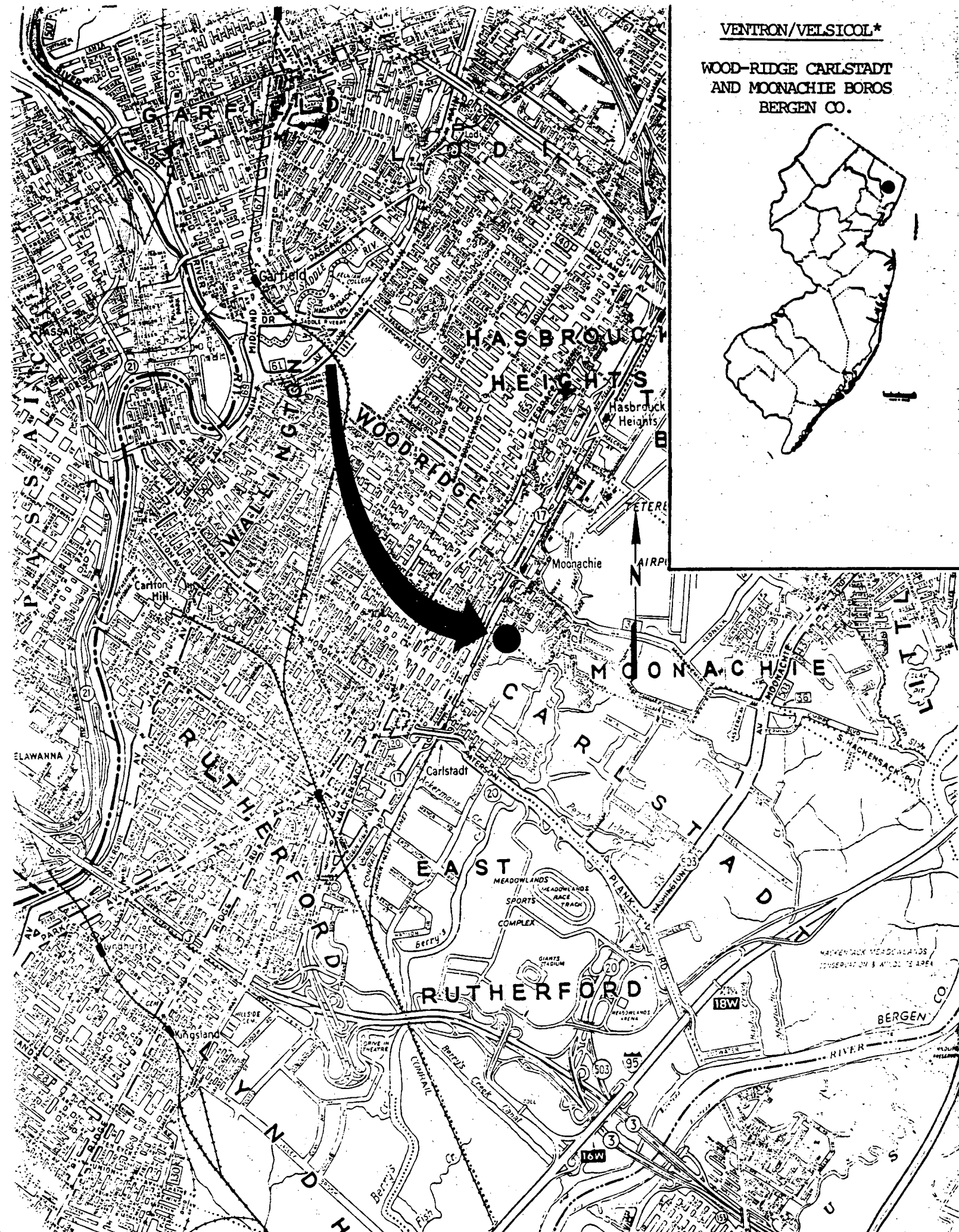
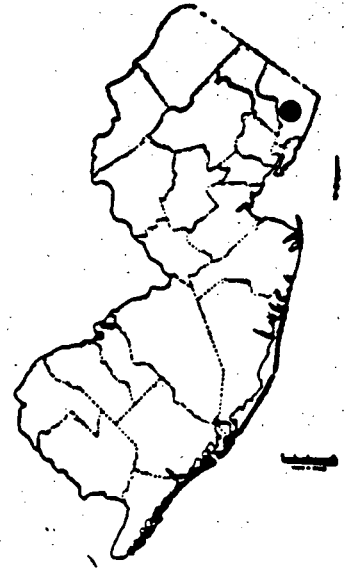
Regulatory agency involvement at this site began in the late 1950s when the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), a predecessor to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), performed inspections and sampling. Analyses of samples taken from the discharge into Berry's Creek revealed excessive levels of suspended solids and biochemical oxygen demand. At this time mercury levels were below detection limits of analytical methods then used. Throughout the 1960s the NJDOH was not successful in eliminating or, at least, having the effluent suitably treated.

An increase of mercury contamination incidents in the 1970s prompted the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to investigate mercury users nationwide. As a result the regulatory agencies involved (USEPA, NJDEP) directed Wood-Ridge Chemical/Ventron to reduce mercury discharge levels. Despite the initiation of a two-phase waste water treatment plan at the site, elevated mercury levels consistently appeared in the total effluent. Uncontrolled releases of mercury continued into the plant discharge system until the closing of the plant in 1974. Consequently in 1978 the State of New Jersey initiated legal action against Ventron, Velsicol et al. for their part in the mercury contamination of Berry's Creek. A ruling by a lower court judge found that the companies were liable for the cost of cleanup and removal. The "remedy" portion of the case was not decided.

The chemical companies took this lower court decision to the Appellate Court. In 1981, the Appellate Court Judge upheld the lower court decision, and required NJDEP to prepare a "Clean Up Plan of Berry's Creek" for the court's consideration. (It is important to note that the court was only requesting a plan for the cleanup of the Creek and not the site as well.) The court ruled that NJDEP failed to prove that groundwater from the site was leaking into Berry's Creek. Therefore, it was deemed appropriate to clean up the stream initially and then monitor it for a year to evaluate

VENTRON/VELSICOL*

WOOD-RIDGE CARLSTADT
AND MOONACHIE BOROS
BERGEN CO.



whether or not the site and the adjacent wetlands are sources of contamination.

The Cleanup Plan developed by NJDEP provided for the dredging of approximately 12,000 feet of Berry's Creek to a depth of four feet deep, from the railroad bridge just north of the site, to the Route 3 bridge located downstream (roughly 175,000 cubic yards). The sediments would be placed in a secure dewatering/disposal facility to be constructed on approximately 19 upland acres of the site. Additionally, a cutoff wall (bentonite slurry) to the underlying clay layer would be constructed around the perimeter of the disposal site.

This Cleanup Plan was conditionally accepted by the Appellate Court Judge pending receipt of all necessary permits to implement the cleanup. Included among the required permits would be a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit to dredge the stream, commercial dredging and waterfront development permits from NJDEP's Division of Coastal Resources, and a Stream Encroachment Permit and Water Quality Certificate from NJDEP's Division of Water Resources.

The chemical companies made their final appeal to the New Jersey Supreme Court, which heard arguments by the defendants and the State in January 1983. On July 21, 1983, the Supreme Court decided points of the appeal in favor of the State.

In January 1984, the corporations initiated negotiations with the State for the purpose of developing a mutually acceptable Consent Agreement to conduct a comprehensive Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) addressing the mercury contamination. The companies' failure to sign a Consent Order by the July 1, 1984 deadline resulted in the NJDEP filing a Cooperative Agreement application with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) for \$1,220,000 in Superfund money to conduct the RI/FS. On September 28, 1984 the USEPA awarded this grant to the NJDEP.

Subsequent successful negotiations between the responsible parties and the State resulted in the signing of a Stipulation and Supplementary Order on October 15, 1984 which forms the framework for responsible parties to conduct the RI/FS under terms outlined by the NJDEP. In accordance with this Order, Morton-Thiokol and Velsicol Chemical have posted letters of credit totaling \$1,210,000 to cover the cost of this study.

Currently, A Site Action Committee (SAC), has been established to oversee the planning and implementation of the RI/FS. The SAC, which will serve as the decision-making authority, consists of three NJDEP representatives and two representatives for the responsible parties.

The responsible parties have agreed to pay the entire cost of the RI/FS. They have also agreed to a Scope of Work developed by NJDEP which includes the performance of ten detailed tasks. Although there have been other Superfund-related cases involving responsible party investigations and/or cleanups, the agreement reached between NJDEP and the responsible parties over the Berry's Creek site stands unprecedented. The SAC allows for a cooperative effort which gives NJDEP control of the remedial process while allowing for the participation of the responsible parties.

The study area will consist of the 40 acre parcel of property located in Wood-Ridge and Carlstadt Boroughs, and the contiguous wetlands which also includes portions of Moonachie and East Rutherford Boroughs. The RI/FS will determine the extent of the problem at the Berry's Creek site and in the surrounding ecosystem. Remedial action alternatives will be thoroughly evaluated prior to a remedial recommendation.

Key Issues

Because the mercury contamination has been relatively stable, any disturbance in the immediate environment could lead to its destabilization and possible contaminant release. Thus, the best approach to cleanup will be difficult to determine. Another key issue in this area controlled by the Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission (HMDC) is that of future development of the site and its surroundings after the cleanup.

History of Community Involvement

In 1979, results of a New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) study of residents and workers from the surrounding area were released. Approximately half of the local residents and workers responded with completed questionnaires and submitted blood, urine and hair samples. The results indicated that excessive uptake of mercury had not occurred and that there was not an acute health hazard at that time.

Since the survey there has been little community involvement regarding the site. The industrial/commercial sector has shown some interest but the more immediate concern in the study area is the overall problem of continuous flooding in the Meadowlands.

Over the past few years, there has been sporadic media coverage of developments at the site. This has been generally limited to newspaper articles which discussed the litigation, plans for cleanup, and the site's listing on the National Priorities List.

Responsible Party Involvement in Community Relations

The responsible parties have expressed an interest in assisting with community relations activities at the site during the RI/FS. They have been informed of the NJDEP (Superfund) Community Relations program and policies.

Community relations activities of this site are anticipated to be much the same as those at publicly-funded cleanup at hazardous waste sites and are outlined on pages 6 and 7 of this plan. The responsible parties have agreed to undertake tasks as assigned by the NJDEP's Office of Community Relations and as warranted by the uniqueness of this site's management. These tasks include the generation of flyers and fact sheets for NJDEP approval and distribution, and participation at public meetings.

Objectives of the Community Relations Program

1. Ensure that elected officials and interested citizens are kept abreast of plans and site developments.
2. Ensure the participation of local officials in all appropriate community relations activities and establish means of obtaining input from affected citizens and community leaders on remedial alternatives under consideration.
3. Provide local press with accurate information about important proposed actions.
4. Provide feedback to participants.

Community Relations Techniques To Be Used

<u>Technique</u>	<u>Objective</u>
1. Telephone Calls	-- to maintain lines of communication with local and other officials as well as involved citizens.
2. Briefings	-- to inform officials, residents and other interested parties about the nature of the planned remedial action, and to provide them with background material on the technical studies when requested.
3. Press Release	-- to provide accurate information to local press and interested citizens (through the NJDEP Press Office).
4. Public Meetings	-- to inform citizens of planned or ongoing activities and to discuss and receive citizen feedback on possible courses of action.
5. Fact Sheets	-- to be distributed at meetings or in response to local press or citizen inquiries to ensure public understanding of basic issues involved in the remedial program.
6. Responsive Summary	-- to provide a final summary of citizen concerns and problem areas, and the governmental response to them.

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Proposed Work Plan and Estimated Schedule (Calendar Year)

<u>Time (Initiation of Action)</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Staff Responsibilities</u>
<u>Remedial Investigation/ Feasibility Study</u>		
2nd quarter of 1986 (The report is expected to take 24 months for completion.)	Two public meetings, one at beginning and one at end of feasibility study.	*
	Press releases to advertise meetings, as necessary.	***
	1 Responsive Summary conducted in cooperation with contractor after public discussion of alternatives and 30 day comment period.	**
<u>Engineering Design</u>		
To be announced	Fact Sheets and/or briefings, or meetings, as necessary.	*
	Press releases to advertise meetings, as necessary.	***
<u>Removal/Treatment/Construction</u>		
To be announced	Fact Sheets and/or briefings or meetings, as necessary	***
	1 Responsive Summary.	**
	1 Media Appearance, as necessary.	*
<u>Travel</u>		
	Approximately 3 trips to site location, with additional trips scheduled as necessary to meet community requirements.	

- * NJDEP/HSMA+ Community Relations Representative(s)
NJDEP/HSMA Bureau of Site Management Representative(s)
NJDEP/HSMA Bureau of Environmental Evaluation and Risk Assessment
Representatives(s) (as necessary)
NJDEP/HSMA Administrator (as necessary)
NJDEP LEGal or other staff (as necessary)
USEPA Representative(s) (as necessary)
Project Contract, (when requested)
- ** NJDEP/HSMA Community Relations Staff
- *** NJDEP/HSMA Community Relations Staff, through the NJDEP Public
Information Office
- + Hazardous Site Mitigation Administration
NOTE: Staff work hours could not be estimated at the time.

Contacts

Federal Officials

Senator Bill Bradley (202) 224-3224
Senator Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

District Office (201) 836-1507
790 Grange Road
Teaneck, NJ 07666

Senator Frank Lautenberg (201) 244-4744
Senator Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

District Office (201) 645-3030
Suite 1510
Gateway One, Gateway Center
Newark, NJ 07103

Representative Robert G. Torricelli (District 9) (202) 225-5061
House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

District Office (201) 646-1111
27 Warren Street
Hackensack, NJ 07601

State Officials (District 36)

Senator Joseph Hirkala (201) 473-2210
633 Main Ave. Room 1004
Passaic, NJ 07055

Assemblymen Robert P. Hollenbeck (201) 546-3444
Assemblyman Richard F. Visotcky
104 Midland Avenue
Garfield, NJ 07206

Robert E. Mulchahy III, Commissioner (201) 935-8500
New Jersey Sports Authority
P.O. Box C-200
East Rutherford, NJ 07073

Regional Planning Group

Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission (HMDC) (201) 460-1700
One DeKorte Park Plaza
Lyndhurst, NJ 07071

Hackensack Meadowlands Environment Center (201) 460-8300
Two DeKorte Park Plaza
Lyndhurst, NJ 07071
Ann Galli
Paul Galuzzi
Robert Grant, Public Information Officer

County Officials

John F. Curran, Freeholder Director (201) 646-2000
Bergen County
Administration Building
Hackensack, NJ 07601

Richard L. Nelson, County Administrator
Carl R. Hartmann, County Clerk

Michael Guarino, Health Officer (201) 646-2600
Bergen County Dept. of Health
and Human Services
327 East Ridgewood Avenue
Paramus, NJ 08652

Arthur Odabash (201) 646-2896
Bergen County Planning Board
29 Linden Street
Hackensack, NJ 07601

Donald J. Clark, Planning Director

John G. Costello, Executive Director (201) 641-2552
Bergen County Utilities Authority
Mehrhof Road
Little Ferry, NJ 07643

Richard F. Killeen, Director
Solid Waste Management Division

Local Officials

Borough of Carlstadt

Dominick Presto, Mayor (201) 939-2850
500 Madison Street
Carlstadt, NJ 07072

Claire Fay, Deputy Clerk

Al Grieco, Health Officer
Mid-Bergen Regional Health Center
201 Continental Avenue
Rivers Edge, NJ 07661

(201) 261-8008

Harry Gerecke, Borough Engineer
289 Albany Road
Saddle Brook, NJ 07662

(201) 845-4614

John Langan, Borough Attorney
401 Hackensack Avenue
Hackensack, NJ 07601

(201) 488-4484

Erwin Fedkenheuer, President
Carlstadt Planning Board
1 Madison Street
East Rutherford, NJ 07073

(201) 438-1568

Borough of East Rutherford

James L. Plosia, Mayor
One Everett Place
East Rutherford, NJ 07073

(201) 933-3444

Rose Staropoli, Clerk

Ruth Dawson-Ruth, Health Officer
10 Beaver Avenue
North Arlington, NJ 07032

(201) 991-4367

Harry Gerecke, Borough Engineer
289 Albany Road
Saddle Brook, NJ 07662

(201) 845-4614

Alfred A. Porro, Jr., Borough Attorney
10 Stuyvesant Avenue
Lyndhurst, NJ 07071

(201) 438-1923

Arthur Grady, Chairman
E. Rutherford Planning Board
146 Boiling Springs Avenue
E. Rutherford, NJ 07073

(201) 939-2665

Borough of Moonachie

Frederick J. Dressel
70 Moonachie Road
Moonachie, NJ 07074

(201) 641-9117

Kenneth Izzo, Clerk	(201) 641-1813
Ron Burnett, Councilman and Environmental Commission Head	(201) 641-1813
Howard Boswell, Borough Engineer 78 Mt. Vernon Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660	(201) 641-0770
M. Robert DeCotiis, Borough Attorney 119 Rock Road Glen Rock, NJ 07452	(201) 488-5200
Thomas Turick, Chairman Moonachie Planning Board 33 Moonachie Road Moonachie, NJ 07074	(201) 440-8372

Borough of Wood-Ridge

Herbert Gorab, Mayor 85 Humbolt Street Wood-Ridge, NJ	(201) 933-8458
Gary F. Cosgrove, Councilman Janet L. Lynds, Clerk Robert R. Guida, Borough Attorney	(201) 939-0202 (201) 933-9898
James Walsh, Health Officer Bergen County Health 327 East Ridgewood Avenue Paramus, NJ 08652	(201) 646-2600
Joseph E. Neglia, Borough Engineer 705 Chubb Avenue Lyndhurst, NJ 07071	(201) 939-8805
James Marino, Chairman Wood-Ridge Planning Board 364 Wood-Ridge Avenue Wood-Ridge, NJ 07075	unlisted

Citizen Groups

Citizens for a Concerned Wood-Ridge Eugene Arnold 369 Wood-Ridge Avenue Wood-Ridge, NJ 07075	(201) 935-3979
---	----------------

Environmental Commission (Ad Hoc)
Vincent Pascale
557 Windsor Road
Wood-Ridge, NJ 07075

unlisted

Citizens Hilltop Committee
George Perotta
294 Lafayette Avenue
Lyndhurst, NJ 07071

(201) 935-5295

Hackensack River Canoe Club
Eric Nelson
Flat Rock Brook Nature Center
443 Van Nostrand Avenue
Englewood, NJ 07631

(201) 567-1265

Hackensack River Coalition
Susan Hnatt-Topf
407 Egrett Lane
Secaucus, NJ 07094

(201) 348-6858

Kearny Environmental Community of Concerned
Citizens
Margaret Halloway, President
209 Duke Street
Kearny, NJ

(201) 998-7425

North Jersey Group Sierra Club
Betty Mourey
253 D Kinderkamack Road
River Edge, NJ 07661

(201) 487-3458

Waterfowlers of Bergen County
Ed Moran
539 Jefferson Street
Carlstadt, NJ

(201) 933-0284

We Who Care Committee
P.O. Box 415
Rutherford, NJ 07040

Concerned Citizens

Marion Geddes
Troast Enterprises
201 Rt. 17 North
Rutherford, NJ 07070

(201) 460-9000

Mr. Peter Incardone
22 Charter Oak Street
Wood-Ridge, NJ 07075

(201) 935-2043

Mrs. Louise Shearin
50 Madison Street
Wood-Ridge, NJ 07075

(201) 939-8123

Margaret Utzinger
120 South Irving Street
Ridgewood, NJ 07451

(201) 652-9239

Media Contacts

Press

The Leader Free Press
251 Ridge Road
Lyndhurst, NJ
Editor: John Savino

(201) 438-8700

The Herald News
988 Main Avenue
Passaic, NJ
Editor: Wes Pollard

(201) 365-3100

The Bergen Record
150 River Street
Hackensack, NJ
Editor: Bettina Boxxall

(201) 646-4099

Wood-Ridge Independent
210 Hackensack Street
Wood-Ridge, NJ 07075
Editor: Bob Hannon

(201) 935-1612

South Bergenite
39 Meadow Road
Rutherford, NJ
Editor: Pat White

(201) 933-2700

The Press Journal
21 Grand Avenue
Englewood, NJ
Attention: News Desk

(201) 568-1700

Radio & Television

News Editor
Station WWDJ
P.O. Box 970
Hackensack, NJ 07602

News Editor
WNJV TV
1020 Broad Street
Newark, NJ 07102

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News Director
WFOU FM
795 Cedar Lane
Teaneck, NJ 07666

News Director
WNET TV
Gateway Ave.
Newark, NJ 07102

News Director
WWHT TV
Box TV 68
Newark

News Director
WBGO FM
54 Park Place
Newark, NJ 07102

News Director
WOR AM
1440 Broadway
New York, NY 10018

News Director
WNBC
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10020

News Director
WPIX TV
220 E. 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017

Ann Sorkowitz
Newsroom, Channel 2
524 W. 57th St. Room 4402A
New York, NY 10019

News Desk
WCBS AM
51 W. 52nd St.
New York, NY 10019

News Desk
WXTV CH 41
24 Meadowland Pkwy.
Secaucus, NJ 07094

WPAT Radio
1396 Broad Street
Clifton, NJ 07013

News Director
WABC FM
1330 Ave. of Americas
New York, NY 10019

News Director
WCBS TV
524 W. 57th Street
New York, NY 10019

News Desk
WNET TV CH 13
356 W. 58th Street
New York, NY 10019

News Desk
WABC TV
7 Lincoln Square
New York, NY 10019

News Desk
WINS Radio
90 Park Ave.
New York, NY 10016

News Desk
WOR TV
1440 Boardway
New York, NY 10018

News Desk
11 WPIX Plaza
New York, NY 10017

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Grace Singer, Chief, Office of Community Relations	(609) 984-3081
Joe Maher, Site Manager	(609) 984-3074
Dr. Richard Dime, Site Management Team, HSMA	(609) 633-6801

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Don Hekech, Site Management Team, DAG	

United States Environmental Protection Agency

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Lilliam Johnson, Community Relations Coordinator	(212) 264-2515

Site Advisory Committee (SAC)

Dr. Jorge H. Berkowitz, NJDEP/Administrator, HSMA, SAC Chairman	(609) 984-2902
Hank Garie, NJDEP/ORS	(609) 984-6072
Lawrence Schmidt, NJDEP/OP	(609) 292-2662
Charles Hanson, Velsicol Chemical	(901) 345-1788
Arthur Slesinger, Morton-Thiokol	(312) 621-6738

Responsible Party Community Relations Coordinators

Kathy Brown, Velsicol Chemical	(312) 670-4928
Jean Streeter, Velsicol Chemical	(312) 670-5233

Repositories

The following locations are identified at this time as potential repositories for public review of information concerning the Berry's Creek site.

Mayor's Offices

Borough of Carlstadt
Borough of East Rutherford
Borough of Moonachie
Borough of Wood-Ridge

Libraries

Bergen County Law Library Administrative Building Hackensack, NJ 07601	(201) 646-2056
Carlstadt Public Library 420 Hackensack Street Carlstadt, NJ 07072	(201) 438-8866
East Rutherford Memorial Library 143 Boiling Springs Avenue East Rutherford, NJ 07073	(201) 939-3930

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Wood-Ridge Public Library
231 Hackensack Street
Wood-Ridge, NJ 07075

(201) 438-2455

Other

Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission